We claim:

1. An optical compensatory sheet comprising a cellulose acetate support comprising cellulose acetate, and an optically anisotropic layer containing a discotic liquid crystal molecule, wherein the cellulose acetate support has a Bth^{550} birefringence defined by the following formula in the range of 0.0007 to 0.004:

$$Bth^{550} = \{(nx+ny)/2\}-nz$$

in which each of nx and ny is a principal refractive index measured by light of 550 nm in plane of the support; and nz is a principal refractive index measured by light of 550 nm along a thickness direction of the support.

2. The optical compensatory sheet as defined in claim 1, wherein the cellulose acetate support has a Bi^{550} birefringence defined by the following formula in the range of 0.0002 to 0.003:

$$Bi^{550} = |nx-ny|$$

in which each of nx and ny is a principal refractive index measured by light of 550 nm in plane of the support.

3. The optical compensatory sheet as defined in claim 1, wherein the cellulose acetate has an acetic acid content in the range of 58.0 to 62.5%.

4. The optical compensatory sheet as defined in claim 1, wherein the cellulose acetate has an acetic acid content in the range of 55.0 to 58.0%.

5. The optical compensatory sheet as defined in claim 1, wherein the cellulose acetate support contains a compound having at least two aromatic rings in an amount of 0.3 to 20 weight parts based on 100 weight parts of the cellulose acetate .

6. The optical compensatory sheet as defined in claim 5, wherein the compound has a molecular structure that does not cause a steric hindrance of the configuration between the two aromatic rings.

7. The optical compensatory sheet as defined in claim 1, wherein the cellulose acetate support has a thickness in the range of 40 to 120 μm.

8. The optical compensatory sheet as defined in claim 1, wherein the cellulose acetate support is formed by a solvent casting method.

9. An ellipsoidal polarizing plate comprising a transparent protective film, a polarizing membrane, a cellulose acetate support and an optically anisotropic layer containing a discotic liquid crystal molecule in this order, wherein the cellulose acetate support has a Bth^{550} birefringence defined by the following formula in the range of 0.0007 to 0.004:

$$Bth^{550} = \{(nx+ny)/2\}-nz$$

in which each of nx and ny is a principal refractive index measured by light of 550 nm in plane of the support; and nz is a principal refractive index measured by light of 550 nm along a thickness direction of the support.

10. The ellipsoidal polarizing plate as defined in claim 9, wherein the cellulose acetate support has a Bi^{550} birefringence defined by the following formula in the range of 0.0002 to 0.003:

$$Bi^{550} = |nx-ny|$$

in which each of nx and ny is a principal refractive index measured by light of 550 nm in plane of the support.

11. The ellipsoidal polarizing plate as defined in claim 9, wherein the cellulose acetate has an acetic acid content in the range of 58.0 to 62.5%.

12. The ellipsoidal polarizing plate as defined in claim 9, wherein the cellulose acetate has an acetic acid content in the range of 55.0 to 58.0%.

13. The ellipsoidal polarizing plate as defined in claim 9, wherein the cellulose acetate support contains a compound having at least two aromatic rings in an amount of 0.3 to 20 weight parts based on 100 weight parts of the cellulose acetate .

14. The ellipsoidal polarizing plate as defined in claim 13, wherein the compound has a molecular structure that does not cause a steric hindrance of the configuration between the two aromatic rings.

15. The ellipsoidal polarizing plate as defined in claim 9, wherein the cellulose acetate support has a thickness in the range of 40 to 120 μm.

16. The ellipsoidal polarizing plate as defined in claim 9, wherein the cellulose acetate support is formed by a solvent casting method.

17. A liquid crystal display comprising a liquid crystal cell and two polarizing elements arranged on both sides of the liquid crystal cell, at least one of said polarizing elements being an ellipsoidal polarizing plate comprising a transparent protective film, a polarizing membrane, a cellulose acetate support and an optically anisotropic layer containing a discotic liquid crystal molecule in this order, wherein the cellulose acetate support has a Bth^{550} birefringence defined by the following formula in the range of 0.0007 to 0.004:

$$Bth^{550} = \{(nx+ny)/2\}-nz$$

in which each of nx and ny is a principal refractive index measured by light of 550 nm in plane of the support; and nz is a principal refractive index measured by light of 550 nm along a thickness direction of the support.

18. The liquid crystal display as defined in claim 17, wherein the optically anisotropic layer is arranged between the liquid crystal cell and the cellulose acetate support.

19. The liquid crystal display as defined in claim 17, wherein the cellulose acetate support has a Bi^{550} birefringence defined by the following formula in the range of 0.0002 to 0.003:

$$Bi^{550} = |nx-ny|$$

in which each of nx and ny is a principal refractive index measured by light of 550 nm in plane of the support.

20. The liquid crystal display as defined in claim 17, wherein the liquid crystal cell is a cell of a vertically aligned mode, an optically compensatory bend mode or a hybrid aligned nematic mode.